Welcome to The Philosophy Forum!

Get involved in philosophical discussions about knowledge, truth, language, consciousness, science, politics, religion, logic and mathematics, art, history, and lots more. No ads, no clutter, and very little agreement — just fascinating conversations.

Sign In Create Account

Subscribe
All Discussions
Categories
Images
Most Viewed
Uploads

Categories

Guest category
The Lounge
General Philosophy
Metaphysics & Epistemology
Philosophy of Mind
Ethics
Political Philosophy
Philosophy of Art
Logic & Philosophy of Mathematics
Philosophy of Religion
Philosophy of Science
Philosophy of Language
Interesting Stuff
- Politics and Current Affairs
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Science and Technology

Non-English Discussion
- German Discussion
- Spanish Discussion

Learning Centre
- Resources
- Books and Papers
- Reading groups
- Questions

Guest Speakers
- David Pearce
- Massimo Pigliucci

Debates
- Debate Proposals
- Debate Discussion

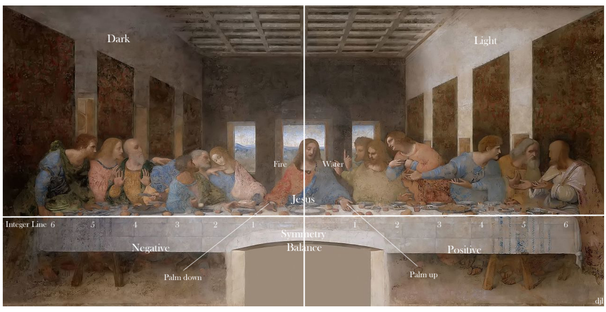
Feedback
Article submissions
About TPF
Help

Other sites we like
Social media
Terms of Service
Sign In
Created with PlushForums
© 2025 The Philosophy Forum

Leonardo's Last Supper Decoded

daniel j lavender
47

Leonardo's Last Supper Decoded
Daniel J. Lavender



"All difference, all variation, all opposition balances as simply being, as simply existence."

We all know Dan Brown's bestselling novel and the subsequent blockbuster film The Da Vinci Code.

Part of the investigation focused on Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper painting. Yet the ideas conveyed within the book and the film are a bit misleading. The symbolism depicted is a bit inaccurate.

I believe to have discovered the true symbolism.

Leonardo's Last Supper signifies unity and balance in all things.

It is a reflection of existence.

The good, the bad. The light, the dark and the commonality holding them together. As well as the differences driving them apart.

Red and blue are considered to be the symbolic colors of fire and water respectively.

Note on the fire side the apostles, specifically John (not Mary), are leaning away from Jesus to avoid burns. Whereas on the water side apostles are leaning right up beside Jesus as the water poses no danger.

Jesus is considered the "light of the world" (John 8:12, John 9:5). Jesus is also the Son of Man and the Son of God. Notice palm down (son/sun down, no light) is on the dark side, while palm up (son/sun up, light) is on the light side. Fire, darkness, negativity of Hell on the left and light, water, positivity of Heaven on the right.

Also note Judas on the negative, or on the dark side, with the spilled container of salt signifying bad luck. Note the knife on the left side, or the dark, negative side, signifying destruction or malevolence.

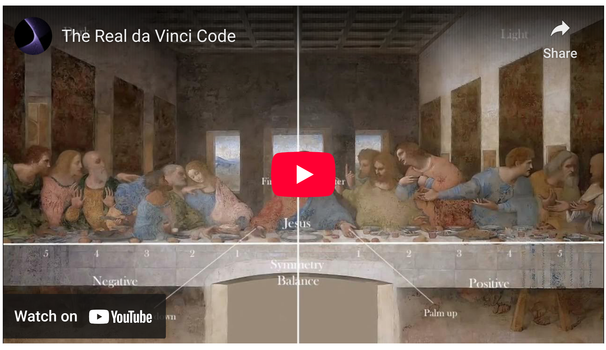
James the Less appears on the left side, or lesser than on the integer line while James the Great appears on the right side, or greater than on the integer line.

The cross formation is not intended as sacrilege but rather to illustrate the symmetry of the art from the ceiling grid to the floor intersecting with the level table edge.

As illustrated by concept of the artwork the form may be interpreted negatively, as anti-Christian, positively, as a sacred symbol as the Cross of Saint Peter or neutrally, as simply a formation of lines.

It's about opposites, a middle ground and balance. Also note the windows allowing observation of the terrain outside the room illustrating inside/outside, interior/exterior or internal/external.

For purposes of interpretation all significant details are retained in copies produced by Leonardo's contemporaries Giampietrino and Andrea Solari.



5 days ago

Count Timothy von Icarus
4.1k

daniel j lavender

> Note on the fire side the apostles, specifically John (not Mary), are leaning away from Jesus to avoid burns. Whereas on the water side apostles are leaning right up beside Jesus as the water poses no danger.

This reminds me of a quote from Pope Benedict XVIIII:

> Some recent theologians are of the opinion that the fire which both burns and saves is Christ himself, the Judge and Savior. The encounter with him is the decisive act of judgement. Before his gaze all falsehood melts away. This encounter with him, as it burns us, transforms and frees us, allowing us to become truly ourselves. All that we build during our lives can prove to be mere straw, pure bluster, and it collapses. Yet in the pain of this encounter, when the impurity and sickness of our lives become evident to us, there lies salvation. His gaze, the touch of his heart heals us through an undeniably painful transformation "as through fire". But it is a blessed pain, in which the holy power of his love sears through us like a flame, enabling us to become totally ourselves and thus totally of God.

Anyhow, reminds me a bit of On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Thirteenth Book of the Odyssey by Porphyry.

5 days ago

Sign in or register to add a comment.

Add a Comment